

PAGE 2

*An ever growing
debate about
semester finals:
Yes or No?*

PAGE 3

*One-Act Works
for Spotlight*
*Mock Trial
Season Ends*

PAGE 6

*Teachers Weigh
in on Plagiarism*
*Band Members
Carol*

PAGE 7

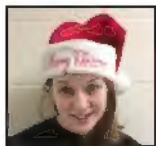
*Least Favorite
Carols*
*Colors Tied with
Personality*

INSIGHT INTO THE CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS/ OF DIFFERENT CULTURES

VIKING SAGA



SEMESTER FINALS ARE A MUST



JENNIFER CLEMENT
Staff Writer

When a person is young and carefree, there is nothing to get in the way of the holidays.

Daydreams of family gatherings and snowmen fill their heads.

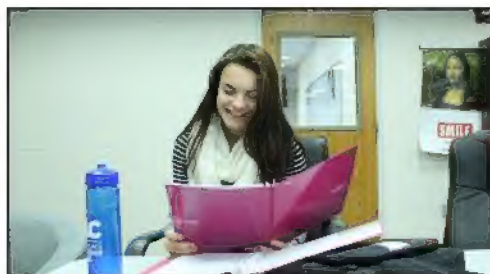
In elementary and middle school, you spend your final days of school having parties and celebrating the end of term. As eighth graders turn into high schoolers, they had no idea of the horrors ahead of them.

They did not foresee the many nights they have to stay up late cramming for these crucial few days of torture. They have to remember everything they learned from the first day of school until present. That is five months' worth of learning.

Students have to dig through the mountain of papers in their lockers to find old

review sheets and try not to cry as the pressure of the evil test overwhelms them.

Now ask yourself this, are these hideous tests necessary? It may sound painful, but yes, they are indeed important.



Senior Hannah Post prepares for finals in the Media Center.

Teachers, and eventually colleges, need to know how much you learned while you were in high school. I think that semester finals are very important, even if they are not enjoyable.

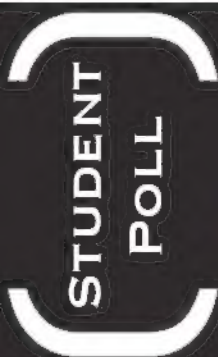
Colleges use these test scores to get an idea if you would succeed at their school. The test may not be as important as the ACTs, and they may not affect your grade much, but colleges really do look at these. They are not some throw away joke.

Students' minds seem to check out as the weather gets colder and the holidays creep closer. By the time the tests come around, all they can think about is winter break.

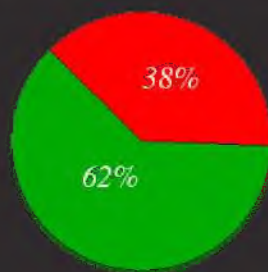
My words of advice for the students of Northwest is to dig a little deeper and not to call it quits until you make the last marks with your number two pencil on your Scantrons.

Three days of tests are not that bad. It will only get worse in college. It is just the sad truth.

Winter and spring finals may be ghastly, horrid, and by the end of them, you may want to hide at the foot of your bed and never come back out. Yet without them, where would you be in ten years?



ARE FINALS NECESSARY?



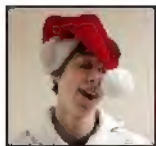
YES

NO



*of 325 students polled

SAY NO TO SEMESTER FINALS



MATT MOFFET
Staff Writer

December, a month of warm feelings, snowy days, holiday festivities and for students: the dreaded finals.

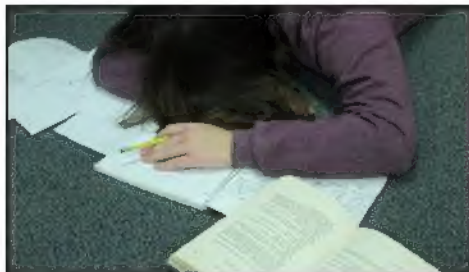
Finals can feel like a burden for anyone, preparation includes staying up late into the

night studying, being paranoid that you're going to bomb the most important exam of the semester and overall, just plain feeling hopeless. Of course this is all necessary, right? No.

Final exams are completely and outright unnecessary. What merit does an exam that covers weeks and weeks of material hold when some of us can't even remember what we ate the prior night?

The whole stigma of evaluating the knowledge you've gained over a long period of time is flawed. Think about this, how can you expect students to remember every lesson plan, every report read, every lecture and to be able to recall all that information in just over an hour? You simply can't.

Think back, do you remember the concept you went over in chemistry just three weeks ago? Unless you have a substantial memory recall, the answer is more than less no. It's nearly impossible to be able to store each and every bit of information, especially when



Senior Elizabeth Donovan lies on the Media Center floor while stressing over semester finals.

we are high schoolers whose minds aren't even to a fully developed stage.

Even with study guides, you can only go so far. Having a sheet of test examples might be helpful, but it's certainly no game changer. Not everyone is adapted in such a way that

they are able to take a look at a sheet of test material and have it stored nice and tidy for the next morning.

This is especially relevant when you take in account the numerous learning constrictions and disabilities a person might have.

No one is perfect; there are people everywhere, especially in our own school, who have "setbacks" ranging from dyslexia to downright poor memory recall.

We are all taking the same test, it does not differ to suit the needs of anyone and having it take a major percentage of points is simply a terrible idea.

So what's the real purpose when it is nearly impossible to give everyone the same experience and pre-set difficulty? The way I see it, its purpose, if any, is asinine and pretentious.

Having to worry about a test that could, in some cases, determine if you fail or succeed in a class you just spent nearly five months in is nothing near a good idea. Let the students enjoy the month and kick finals out of December.

VIKING SAGA

Northwest High School
2710 N. North Rd.
Grand Island, NE 68803
308.385.6394
www.ginorthwest.org

STAFF

Editor-in-Chief
BIBIANA LUEVANO

Staff Writers
TYLEN ARNOLD
JENNIFER CLEMENT
TYLER CLEMENT
AUSTIN FRANSISCO
ALYSSA LILIENTHAL
MATT MOFFETT

Adviser
ELIZABETH KAVAN

The Viking Saga is the official student publication of Northwest High School in Grand Island, Nebraska. It is printed by the Grand Island Independent nine times (monthly) throughout the school year. The paper is a member of the Nebraska High School Press Association.

Outside submissions, suggestions, or letters to the editor are welcome and encouraged. They may be brought to room 32, or emailed to Ms. Kavan at bkavan@ginorthwest.org. Any and all submissions must be signed for them to be considered for publication, and the editor reserves the right to edit or print any submissions.



@nwwikingsaga

Visit our website:
nwwikingsaga.wordpress.com

ONE-ACT WORKS FOR SPOTLIGHT

TYLER CLEMENT
Staff Writer

"One-act is a family that makes people laugh or cry or maybe both. One-act is a hands on play that is used to entertain and or send a positive message," sophomore Jeffrey Sokol said.

The performance of this year was, "A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum."

It is a comedy that takes place in ancient Rome. The play starred the many talents of Jeffrey Sokol [Hysterium], senior Dakota Rader [Hero], junior Isaiah Daws [Psudolus], senior Alanna Wedige [Domina], senior Kyle Perkins [Marcus Lycus], junior Jayden Falldorf [Senex], and junior Rylee Bahe [Philia].

"[I can tell you that] the play is a comedy based in Ancient Rome when courtesans were still a thing. You'll have to see it to understand the rest," senior Ivan Paiz said.

They had only been working on the play for a couple of months.

"We all have to look past

ourselves and work together to put a production like this on, and that is what we do. No one is more important than anyone. We need everyone in our cast to make the play possible and to make it the most we can make it. I loved



Junior Jayden Falldorf and senior Alanna Wedige argue over trivial matters while acting as husband (Senex) and wife (Domina).

one-act because I can act myself, I can be myself and not be judged," Sokol said.

One-Act has been District runner-up for the last eleven years.

"One-act for me has been just a great experience overall. I learned so much speaking and having fun with what you do that all of these things will stay with me for the rest of my life.

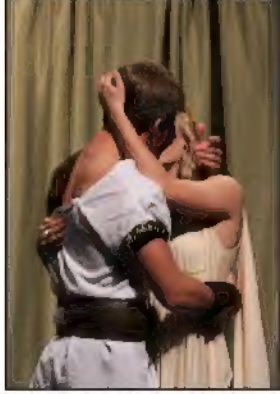
I really wish we could have one more performance for everyone to see," Perkins said.

Students enjoyed the atmosphere the play produced.

"It was one of the most energetic, funny one-acts I've ever seen, with an easy to follow great story line behind it," Rader said.

Students found some moments to be memorable.

"My favorite memory is making people laugh; it is such a great feeling. Especially in a comedy like this, if people are laughing, you are doing your job right," Perkins said.



Senior Dakota Rader (Hero) and junior Rylee Bahe (Philia) share a kiss in celebration of their love.



As Hysterium, sophomore Jeffrey Sokol shows his frustration with Psudolus (junior Isaiah Daws) while they plot to try and persuade the general that Philia is dead.

PHOTOS BY CAROLINE EBERHARDT

MOCK TRIAL ENDS SEASON AT STATE



Ryan Wiese, Carissa Jonak, Megan Canfield, Lacie Nelson, Brian Gibson, Sarah Ruzicka, Kyle Perkins, Becca Laub Gather for a group shot at state Mock Trial.

PHOTOS BY TINA

WIESE

TYLEN ARNOLD
Staff Writer

Mock Trial is an activity where schools gather teams of six to twelve members to learn about the legal system by going through rehearsed trials in a competitive manner.

The Northwest Mock Trial team got an Honorable Mention in districts. Members that were state-bound were senior Becca Laub, junior Sarah Ruzicka, senior Megan Canfield, freshman Carissa Jonak, senior Kyle Perkins, junior Ryan Wiese, and sophomore Lacie Nelson.

The Mock Trial team is split up into two teams Team Black and Team Gold though Team Black lost the preliminary round Team Gold went all the way to state.

The team has described the experience as a positive one.

"My experiences are all really good, it's a lot of fun going to trial and the whole process, getting ready and performing, makes you think and be on your toes, and I really enjoy that," Ruzicka said.

The Mock Trial team had gone through many different competitions.

"Team Gold won their preliminary round and the district final round to advance to state. At state we competed in 3 trials. Round one was against Platteview, round two was

York, and round three was against Ainsworth. After the third round all the teams met for the award ceremony. Eight teams were recognized with Honorable Mentions and the top four teams were ranked. However, they announce third and fourth place and the final two teams go head to head for the state championship. Northwest received Honorable Mention," Mock Trial coach Brian Gibson said.

To some, the practices may have sometimes seemed unreasonably long, but they paid off.

"Long practices may have seemed to have dragged on but I'm glad they did. I think it will be evident how much we've prepared for this by the way we perform," Nelson said.

Though the idea of sitting in a courtroom may seem to some like something akin to torture the team has found it the opposite with great experiences.

"Mock trial is a great experience for everyone, even if you don't want to be involved in law when you grow up," Laub said.

In the past Mock Trial has won five honorable mentions and even placed third in State competition.

"[There is] a lot of nerves waiting for results from regional rounds and hoping we won. Then going back to state and making new friends from the teams," Perkins said.



The Honorable Mention medal has been awarded to Northwest High School five times.

DANISH TRADITIONS SIMILAR TO UNITED STATES

JENNIFER CLEMENT
Staff Writer

In the United States, residents tend to enjoy the Christmas season. Traditions of building snowmen and decorating the tree are important parts of the winter holidays. Even though Christmas is celebrated in most parts of the world, some of their traditions are a little different.

At Northwest, there are four foreign exchange students who will be spending their first Christmas as a Viking.

"[In Denmark] we have a week before Christmas out of school. We celebrate Christmas on the 24th, and nothing with our families, and we decorate the tree. So we do Christmas shopping with our own candy and we decorate the Christmas tree. In Denmark, we use real Christmas trees. [I think] they smell really good."

said foreign exchange student Caroline Eberhardt. In Denmark, their traditions are very similar to American traditions. Christmas festivities are typically held from November 1st until the 24th of December.

In the United States, young children believe in Santa Clause, a magical man who lives in the North Pole and gives gifts to all of the nice children. In Denmark, the children believe in the Julemanden [which means 'Christmas Man'].

The Julemanden looks a lot like Jolly Old Saint Nick, and he also travels around the world with a sleigh and his trusty reindeer. He lives in Greenland, enjoys rice pudding, and is assisted by his 'nisser', which are kin to elves.

Christmas is universal throughout the world, many celebrate it different ways, but all in all, it is the same holiday. Information found on <http://www.whychristmas.com/cultures/>

Christmas around the World

NORWEGIAN STUDENT SHARES CHRISTMAS TRADITION

BIBIANA LUEVANO
Editor-in-Chief

"We do celebrate Christmas in Norway," exchange student Kari-Anne Saerland said.

America is not the only country to join in the celebrated festivities and chestnuts over an open fire.

Other countries also celebrate what some people may deem as the most joyful time of the year.

"[Christmas] is very similar to how America celebrates the holiday. Our color scheme is the same and we also decorate a tree for our house," Saerland said.

Although some of the traditions may seem familiar to Americans, there are still some minute differences in the format of their Christmas.

"[Christmas represents] the night that Jesus was born on that day and the three men came to give him presents. This is the story that we are told and the reason we celebrate Christmas, yet we open the Christmas presents the 24th instead of the 25th [of December]," Saerland said.

Santa Clause may be seen as an iconic figure head in the United States, but his fame has yet to be

contained within American borders.

"Many kids [from Norway] also believe in Santa. If they come from a farm life, they usually set out porridge for the Santa that lives in the barn," Saerland said.

The spirit of Christmas may not only revolve around the belief in Santa or the presents themselves.

Family and friends may also play a huge part in bringing the meaning of Christmas to life.

"You give gifts to friends, but most definitely spend Christmas with family," Saerland said.

The traditions and food are some of the highlights a few people may enjoy the most. Even in the United States, people tend to enjoy this.

Yet it may be the people a student spends Christmas with that brought the merry to Christmas.

"[My favorite memory of Christmas involves] having family around and opening presents," Saerland said.

mas all und e orld

NAVIDAD FOLDS INTO AMERICAN CUSTOMS

MATT MOFFETT
Staff Writer

Christmas may be found as one of the most well acknowledged holiday, even around the world.

The Mexican tradition of Navidad is the equivalent of Christmas but celebrated much differently than Americans celebrate it.

"...The holiday is celebrated a bit differently than it is in America ... though I do not celebrate Navidad, the holiday is well known," sophomore Jose Alvarado said.

Festivities and traditions lurk among the holiday creating something that may be seen as it's own breed of holiday.

"On Navidad, people drink. It's a common way to celebrate the holiday. We also eat tamales," Alvarado said.

Navidad is not just one day of celebration, but like common holidays such as Hanukkah, it is celebrated for a little over a week.

The holiday

of Navidad starts on December sixteenth and continues until January sixth.

"[One of the differences between Christmas and Navidad] is that we celebrate on the twenty-fourth instead of the twenty-fifth," Alvarado said.

A celebration known as 'Posada Processions' is common and can be witnessed through the towns of Mexico. The word 'Posada' actually means inn or hotel in Spanish.

This is of some sort of significance as it represents Mary and Joseph's journey looking for an inn.

Celebrations like these are indeed a lot like the American Christmas, but Navidad has its own traditions, and that makes it unique.

"[Navidad may be found to be a very] religious celebration," Alvarado said.

"KING'S DAY" OBSERVED IN THE CANARY ISLANDS

BIBIANA LUEVANO
Editor-in-Chief

In another country, more specifically Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain, the tradition that America may call Christmas was planned a little more differently than the traditional American holiday.

"We have Christmas similar to America's tradition but it is different mainly because of the climate difference and the day we celebrate. We also call it the 'King's Day' instead of Christmas," exchange student Raquel Mateo said.

While some Northwest students may enjoy making snow angels and having a snowball fight, Mateo tends to spend her holidays at home differently.

"I live on an island in Spain so it's always warm. So when it's Christmas I still go to the beach with friends and tan or swim for the whole day. I think here in America it's more of Christmas because Americans decorate more and actually get snow during the holiday. I don't really decorate my house with lights outside, but we do put up a Christmas tree and decorate it with random ornaments,"

Mateo said.

The big man in red is somewhat of a popularity to some of the students in America, yet other countries may not see Santa as something to celebrate.

"We don't have the belief in Santa Claus, but we do have the Three Magic Kings [Los Tres Reyes Magos]. The Three Magic Kings come to our house on their camels and leave gifts. We celebrate during the 6th of January, the morning after the Three Magic Kings leave gifts for us. Although the Three Magic Kings are similar to the Three Wise Men in the Nativity, there is nothing religious about our belief in the Three Magic Kings," Mateo said.

"New Years is also a big deal for us in Spain. A minute before midnight, everyone turns on the TV, and holds twelve grapes in their hand. Then we countdown the New Year chimes [from the main bell] and eat a grape for every chime, before it becomes midnight," Mateo said.

TEACHERS WEIGH IN ON PLAGIARISM

STRIVING TO TEACH STUDENTS THE CONSEQUENCES OF CHEATING

AUSTIN FRANSISCO

Staff Writer

For many students plagiarism may seem like the easy way out of a situation. Yet it can cause more harm than good.

Plagiarism is defined as taking someone else's work or ideas and using them as one's own. Each teacher has their own policy on plagiarism.

"My policy is if you plagiarize you get a zero," English teacher Michael Witt said.

Different teachers have different approaches to the way they deal with plagiarized assignments.

"It is a zero when you are caught plagiarizing; we are recently implementing a rule that you can redo a plagiarized assignment but the highest grade you can get is a 70%," said English teacher Kaidin Glause.

While there are repercussions for plagiarizing in high school, the consequences may grow worse if students do so in college.

"In college when you plagiarize you get a zero and expelled, you don't get your money back, your credits or

anything," Witt said.

Teachers also each have their own way to check for plagiarized assignments. With the popularity of the internet and newer technology, checking for plagiarism has become much easier for teachers.

"It used to be that I would have to look through kids' sources, manually, but the internet has made it a lot easier since I make kids turn it in at turnitin.com because it's an originality check. A lot of times I can tell [if it's plagiarized] because the voice sounds different than what their true writing voice which makes me suspicious," Witt said.

The method of checking for plagiarism also tends to vary from teacher to teacher.

"There are a couple of different things; for big assignments we use turnitin.com which will highlight pieces of text from other published material. If we don't use that I can tell by reading it, usually the vocabulary is too big or the word choice doesn't make sense, if a sentence sticks out that doesn't sound like the rest of essay you can usually look

it up online and see where it came from," Glause said.

Plagiarism may be a common occurrence at Northwest according to teachers. While not many students plagiarize, some may still do so.

"If we are just starting, at the beginning of the year I see a lot [of plagiarism], but as the year goes on I see less and less of it, but it never goes away," said Witt.

It may differ between teachers on how much plagiarism occurs throughout the school year.

"I usually see about one plagiarized assignment for every paper that gets turned in. For about every 50 kids, there is one plagiarized assignment," Glause said.

As technology changes and evolves so does the way students may plagiarize and the way teachers have to combat it.

Plagiarism may also affect a student's future and it may be necessary to understand the full impact of such a choice.

"If our kids intend to go on to the next level of education like they should, they should understand how serious this is," Witt said.



Students who are a part of the Northwest Band meet up at Hy-Vee to play Christmas music for the public. Participants include sophomore Benjamin Krupicka, sophomore Noah Mahan, junior Macey Kroeger, senior Hannah Post, junior Jayden Falldorf, freshman Deanna Montanez-Mendoza, junior Noah Mrkvicka, senior Cody Bristow, and alumina Jeremy Kroeger.

PHOTO BY JENNIFER CLEMENT

BAND BRINGS JOY THROUGH CAROLS

ALYSSA LILIENTHAL

Staff Writer

For some people Christmas is about family, but for others, it may be an isolated time by themselves. Northwest band members have decided to bring holiday cheer to the lonesome.

"The folks at the nursing home get very lonely, especially around the holidays and so to have someone come in and do anything with them is really a treat for them. That's why I thought the gift of music to them would be especially meaningful for those folks and bring them joy," band director Shawn Pfanstiel said.

The idea of caroling stated when a small group of students played for a

company Christmas party.

"We had ten students interested and it was kind of a hit and so I thought, well let's see if we can get some more kids going," Pfanstiel said.

Some places they were visiting included Hy-Vee, the Veteran's home, Primrose, Good Samaritan Center, Riverside Lodge, Bickford Cottage, and a few others. They were split into three groups of seven to eight people each.

"We're gonna do some singing; we picked out parts for everybody, so we have solos and we have some duets," freshman Kyleigh Smith, leader of a group of eight, said.

Some of the songs that they are performing are "Coventry Care," "Silent Night," and "Away In The Manger."

"Sing alongs, real easy arrangements, just really basic—hopefully, they will sing along," Pfanstiel said.

The band members plan on performing not just on instruments, but with voices as well.

"We plan on doing all the songs at each place; we do a little show for them," Smith said.

The residents are not the only ones who will benefit from the experience.

"I think the best part of caroling is going out and having a fun time with your friends in band! I think we learn how to improve the playing of our instruments with just simple tunes to play. We're doing our best to help people enjoy music during this Christmas season," Smith said.

KRAMER'S WRECKER SERVICE, INC.

Light and Heavy Duty Towing



3405 N. US Hwy. 281
Grand Island, NE 68803
(308) 384-1116

Owners:
Tim and Lisa Bartz



Students Find Their Personality Through Their Favorite Color

Blue is full of peace and calm. The color blue induces peace within us, particularly the deeper shades.

Purple makes you feel immature. Purple can encourage fantasy and an idealism that is often difficult to achieve in real life.

Turquoise represents emotional control. Turquoise is the color of balance, for the emotions, thoughts and speech.

Effects of red are attention-getting. It demands you to take notice, alerting you to danger.

Green represents harmony and balance. Green is the great balancer of our mental, emotional and physical energies.

Pink shows affection. Pink offers warmth and tenderness to friends and family.

Jim's Gyros

Something Different
in Grand Island



Business Hours
Monday - Saturday
10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Closed on Sundays

2261 N. Webb Road
Grand Island, NE 68803
(308) 382-7366



WHAT IS YOUR **LEAST** FAVORITE CHRISTMAS CAROL?

- Christmas (Baby Please Come Home) - 35%**
- The Little Drummer Boy - 22%**
- Santa Claus is Coming to Town - 12%**
- Jingle Bell Rock - 12%**
- O' Holy Night - 11%**
- Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas - 9%**

*Out of 326 students polled
*Options chosen from list of "most popular Christmas songs"

DQ 3660 W. Capital Ave.
Grand Island




Follow
us on
Twitter:

@nwviking
saga



TOM Dinsdale

**GMC****BMW**

Dinsdaleauto.com 3312 W Stolley Park Rd
Sales * Service Parts * Body Shop * Pre-Owned Autos * Trucks * SUVs

\$250 Off Any Dinsdale Vehicle Purchase

\$10 Oil Change

*Some restrictions may apply. See Dealer for details.
Must have valid NWHS ID to redeem.*